

Building and Facilities Committee

Minutes of 10-10-19

Syd Crook Room, Academy Building; 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Bowers, Lewis, Williams, Bianchi, Cross, Cardillo,
Beasley, Sherman, Cannon, Hogle

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. *Approval of Minutes*

The minutes of the previous meeting of October 3, 2019 were reviewed by the Committee, and were then approved unanimously by those who attended, Cannon and Hogle abstaining.

2. *Reports*

Mr. Cross reported that the final accounting from North Branch will come in under \$600,000, which will include approximately \$50,000 in additional work done pursuant to approved change orders; and, that the question reported at the September 5 meeting had been resolved.

The Chair reported that Kim Hallquist has sent a reminder request to Will at Harriman, and he is working on our request for the sq. ft. stds. used by Harriman; and will send it as soon as possible. He also reported that he had attended the Energy Committee's meeting Wed. (10-9) to introduce himself and talk about coordinated efforts where their work coincided with this Committee's work. Two areas touched on were solar panels on Town buildings in general, and the Fire Station in particular; and, ensuring that any solar array at the "sewer department" property would not preclude any future construction of Town buildings, if that ever arose as a need, nor would it preclude access to any such buildings. The Energy Committee informed him they were very much in favor of solar panels on the Fire Station roof, and that it should occur when the roof was replaced; that they were looking at solar on the DPW main garage roof; that other buildings were more problematic for solar arrays due to their historic significance,

such as the Library and Whipple Hall proper; and that the solar array, and the intended expansion of that at some point, would not interfere with any new buildings constructed on other areas of the property, nor would it interfere with access to any such buildings. They also noted that the Building Committee should be aware of other aspects of their work that would impact Town buildings, such as refitting all buildings with LED lighting; efforts to reduce demand for energy such as oil, gas and electricity; and, similarly, to improve heat retention in the envelopes of all buildings where possible.

The discussion ended with agreement that the two Committees would strive to keep in communication and to work in tandem on issues of mutual interest.

3. *Discussion of Buker building issues and Police Dept. space needs options.*

The Chair noted that the Committee had expressed at the last meeting that it wished to make decisions on the options it had been discussing, in order to determine if it was ready to make a recommendation to the Selectmen regarding a proposed path forward for the Police Department and Buker building. To that end, he asked that members of the Committee indicate their preferences as to each option.

First, he called on John Lewis, asking if he had a Motion he wished to make.

Mr. Lewis stated that he did have such a motion, but would like to first discuss his proposal before making it a formal motion. His proposal would be to hold off on any recommendation until further discussion and review, to include Chief Andersen and the Selectmen. He felt the Committee was moving too quickly, particularly as to what the police want and expect; we need to be careful in our recommendation and to be sensitive to how any decision on a recommendation will be perceived. He believes the Committee should come up with an interim proposal and discuss it with the Selectmen.

Mr. Cardillo noted that if the Committee did wish to delay making a recommendation, it should not feel beholden to the budget process, and should act on what it considered the right thing to do. He also noted that the Committee cannot have independent conversations with the Selectmen, and all such

meetings would be open to the public after proper notice. Mr. Sherman agreed that any decision reached should not be based on a concern that the budget process had begun.

Mr. Williams pointed out that the Committee had not gotten into design issues, and rightly so. There was then general discussion that to have a grasp on what was possible at the Buker building to address the police department issues would require retaining a professional to address those issues; and that it was part of that process, with give and take on what could and could not be done on these issues, that would ultimately lead to a design phase produced by that professional, which would better define a proposal. Only then could the Committee move forward on assessing the pros and cons of that design, and pursue general estimates of the cost that would be associated with that design.

Mr. Cross proposed that the Committee should review the options and determine if the Committee could narrow them down and give the Selectmen a sense of what the Committee felt was the best and most viable option.

Mr. Beasley suggested that he was in favor of evaluating the possibilities of renovations of the Buker building, with an eye toward better efficiencies and flow of work and personnel (“process” expertise), with the possibility that a more detailed analysis by an architect and process expert might lead to the conclusion by this Committee that an addition to the Buker building of some sort might make sense. He felt that the Committee should move toward hiring an expert with these qualifications, and reserve decisions on whether an addition makes sense until after that review is completed.

There was much discussion of this suggestion, with the general opinion of the Committee that this made sense.

The Chair then suggested that in order to refine the Committee’s thinking on these issues, and to give insight to further discussions on Mr. Lewis’s motion to be made, it would make sense to get the sense of the Committee on the various options that have been discussed at such great length. To this end, he inquired of the Committee:

1. Who is in favor of the option to do nothing, and leave the Police Dept. and the Rec. Dept. as they now function, with no renovations.

Ten (10) were opposed to doing nothing; none (0) in favor.

2. Who is in favor of the option to build a brand new police station on a separate site.

Ten (10) were opposed to building a new police station; none (0) in favor of a new police station.

3. Who is in favor of relocating the Recreation Department and making renovations to the Buker building to address the issues of the Police Department, including use of the space now occupied by the Recreation Department; with the possibility that if the design process so indicated some form of addition to the Buker building could be considered.

Ten (10) were in favor of this option; none (0) were opposed.

The Chair then recognized Mr. Lewis for his motion. Mr. Lewis moved, and Mr. Sherman seconded, that:

The Committee make no recommendation to the Selectmen regarding the Police Department at this time; and continue to discuss the issue.

The Chair called for any further discussion, and after discussion the Motion was defeated, eight (8) opposed, one (1) in favor. The Chair abided by general rules of order and did not vote.

There then ensued additional discussion on the process that would be involved, and what could reasonably be recommended to the Selectmen regarding budget needs. The general sense of the Committee was that if an appropriate expert were retained, there would be a period of time before the Committee would have estimates of the cost of work that was recommended, and without fairly firm numbers the Committee was not in a position to make any recommendations on a bond issue which might be required to carry out the final recommendations of this Committee for work proposed; and that it would be premature to request a “place-holder” for any such bond. The Committee noted that the Selectmen could on their own make a recommendation for a bond amount, and that the Committee had no objection to the Selectmen doing so.

After further discussion, it was moved by Mr. Bianchi, and seconded by Mr. Williams, that:

The Committee recommends to the Selectmen that doing nothing at the Buker building to meet the Police Department needs is not an appropriate option; and that building a brand new building for the Police Department is also not an appropriate option.

The Motion passed, eight (8) in favor; one (1) opposed. The Chair abided by general rules of order and did not vote. The Committee member voting “no” stated that his only objection was to the inclusion of the word “appropriate” in the phrase, “and that building a brand new building for the Police Department is also not an appropriate option.”

It was then moved by Mr. Bianchi, and seconded by Mr. Cross, that:

The Committee recommends to the Selectmen that the Selectmen retain, from funds in the current budget, the services of an architect with process expertise, or an architect and process expert, to draw up specific preliminary plans for renovation of the current space at the Buker building, to include the space currently occupied by the Recreation Department, to meet the Police Department needs; with the development of such plan in the review process to include representatives of the Police Department, the Building and Facilities Committee, and the Selectmen.

The Motion passed, nine (9) in favor; none (0) opposed. The Chair abided by general rules of order and did not vote.

The Chair then called for a vote based on the earlier discussions of this meeting, and informed by discussions of earlier meetings, which addressed the relocation of the Recreation Department.

It was then moved by Mr. Bianchi, and seconded by Mr. Hoglund, that:

The Committee recommends to the Selectmen that the Recreation Department be relocated in order to provide adequate space for the Police Department in the Buker building.

The Motion passed, nine (9) in favor; none (0) opposed. The Chair abided by general rules of order and did not vote.

The Chair informed the Committee that he would prepare a draft Supplemental Report #1 to the Selectmen, informing them of these recommendations and providing other pertinent information; and would include a statement of the rationale behind the recommendations adopted as has been generally discussed by the Committee throughout its deliberations. He asked Mr. Beasley if he would assist in preparing this report, and Mr. Beasley agreed to do so. When drafted, the Chair will send it to the Committee for discussion and action at its next meeting, October 17. It is the Chair's intention to forward the final version of this Report, as adopted and approved by the Committee at that meeting, to the Selectmen and to the Budget Committee, for their review prior to, and discussion at, the joint meeting they will hold on Monday, October 21, at 6:30 p.m. He requested that Committee members attend that meeting in order to better respond to any questions and to inform those bodies of any pertinent information related to the decisions and recommendations of the Committee.

4. Discussion of budget

The Committee discussed budget issues, and concluded that there was no present need to request funding to be included in the budget, other than as addressed by departments as set forth in the Committee's Preliminary Report to the Selectmen; and, if the Selectmen found there were not sufficient funds in the current budget to retain the expert as recommended by Vote of this Committee at this meeting, then, in that case, the Committee would request that such funds be included in the budget.

5. Action Items.

- a. Chair to inquire of other towns in Merrimack County as to the number of full time officers employed and the gross sq. ft. of their

police departments (held over from the last meeting, and not yet accomplished).

- b. Chair and Mr. Beasley to prepare Supplemental Report #1 for review and action on October 17, 2019.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held in the Syd Crook room on Thursday, October 17, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Bowers, Chair